

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Tripp-Delmont School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2004-2005**

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Dates of On Site Visit: November 15, 2004

Date of Report: November, 28, 2004

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan

Promising Practice

In the Tripp-Delmont district, 100% of the students participated in the state and district wide assessments in 2004-2004, with a variety of modifications being utilized. In 2004 100% of the Tripp-Delmont special education staff is fully certified. The steering committee finds this to be a promising practice.

The steering committee noted that the Tripp-Delmont school district has shown a promising practice by attending a data retreat two years in a row, to better help the district analyze and interpret the data received from annual testing. The district will use this information to better target areas that may be a concern, and implement a plan to improve those areas.

The committee agreed that Tripp-Delmont school district has a promising practice in participating and utilizing the ESA on line for professional development. Trainings are also offered to parents.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee agrees that the Tripp-Delmont school district has a local interagency agreement with the South Central Cooperative to provide Birth – Three Services, early childhood special education services, speech and language services, occupational therapy and physical therapy services. The comprehensive plan pp. 10—13 outlines child identification procedures, policy statements, the district's public awareness campaign, and the South Central Cooperative area-wide screening or by referral. Area-wide screening will be completed for speech, language, hearing, and early childhood comprehensive assessment and for regular classroom assessment of each new student.

Due to the fact that the Tripp-Delmont school district has established a necessary and time effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay; the steering committee agrees that this is an area that meets requirements. The Tripp-Delmont district utilizes pre-referral interventions and support services available, along with the team of staff, written documentation of interventions, and systematic observation documentation of students who may be in need of multidisciplinary evaluations to determine significant needs. Information is gathered concerning a student's strengths, weaknesses, and modifications/accommodations and assistance, techniques and strategies used- before multidisciplinary evaluations take place.

The December 2003 child count information indicates that no child with a disability was enrolled in a private school, however, the Tripp-Delmont district would follow the procedures as outlined in the comprehensive plan and in the parents rights brochure; therefore the steering committee finds this to meet requirements.

The committee found that no child with disabilities was placed in a private school or facility on the December 2003 Child Count. According to the District's Comprehensive Plan pp. 68-74 the Tripp-Delmont District would establish and implement procedures for the placement of children with disabilities in private schools, and if applicable, the district would implement the placement.

The comprehensive plan indicates that goals for the performance of children with disabilities are established and consistent to the maximum extent appropriate with goals and standards for all children established in the state. These goals are aligned with the state content standards for education in the areas of language arts, math, social studies, and science. The functional standards are aligned with the general education content standards in that both sets of standards contain the same goals and indicators and were developed as an alternative to the general education standards and mandated district and statewide assessments.

The Tripp-Delmont district suspension and expulsion data indicate that from 2000-2003 the number of disabled and non-disabled students suspended or expelled is zero. The committee agrees that this is area that meets requirements.

The steering committee found that the Tripp-Delmont school district has established and implemented procedures for the employment of special education personnel. The Tripp-Delmont superintendent ensures that those providing special education and related services are trained, licensed, certified or otherwise qualified. The South Central Cooperative is responsible for ensuring that the early childhood

teachers, evaluators, related services providers employed by the cooperative meet all of the appropriate endorsement requirements. It is felt that this meets requirements.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

Based on interviews with school personnel, the review team agrees with all areas that the Tripp-Delmont steering committee felt met requirements.

While the team agrees that all of the students participated in the state and district wide assessments; that there was attendance at a Data Retreat for two years; and teachers have utilized the professional development trainings offered by the ESA, the review team finds these are areas that meet requirement or assist in meeting requirements and therefore are not identified as promising practices.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Surveys
- Files

Promising Practices

The Tripp-Delmont school district always provides free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children at public expense and the steering committee finds this to be a promising practice.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee agreed that the Tripp-Delmont school district believes in open, honest communication with parents of all students, nondisabled and those whose child may have a disability. Annual parent surveys/needs assessments and public meetings are held by the South Central Cooperative to ensure opportunity for discussion of program services and goals. Each student's IEP includes addresses the need for alternative placements, and the justification for placement as documented in 100% of the student files.

The committee found that not children on IEP's were suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative school days. In the event that the Tripp-Delmont school district would suspend/expel a student, the Tripp-Delmont school district would implement policies and procedures for the suspension or expulsion of students with disabilities as stated the in the comprehensive plan pp.76-84, which ensures that FAPE is available to all children with disabilities.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

Based on file reviews and teacher interviews the review team agrees that the Tripp-Delmont school district has good communication with all parents and has policies in place should a student be suspended or expelled for more than ten days.

The team also finds that providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students at public expense is a requirement for all schools, therefore it is not identified as a promising practice.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- MDT/eligibility report
- Comprehensive Plan
- Parent Surveys
- Teacher Surveys
- Student File Reviews
- Compliance Monitoring Report
- CSPD Needs Assessment

Promising Practices

The Tripp-Delmont district collaborates with the Colony German Teacher to assist in working with parents and students.

Meets Requirements

The Tripp-Delmont district's comprehensive plan outlines procedures for appropriate written notice and obtains informed consent before assessments are administered to a child as part of an evaluation or re-evaluation. Based on a review of files the steering committee found that parental consent was obtained for evaluations and reevaluations; tests listed were administered; and tests were not given that were not listed.

The steering committee found that the Tripp-Delmont school district had recently purchased updated testing instruments to ensure they meet the evaluation and reevaluation requirements. They noted that the functional assessment component is an area that has improved, and with the in-service training, will continue to be improved and applied. All areas of suspected disability were evaluated and transition evaluations were conducted

The committee concluded that multidisciplinary and multifaceted evaluations are administered by trained and qualified personnel to help ensure proper identification. The district has used an informal system for TAT teams, but has recently reviewed and is in the process of implementing a more formal TAT system.

The steering committee agreed that reevaluations were conducted at least every 3 years and that parent input into the re-evaluation process was documented.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

Based on interviews with the special education teacher who provides services to the colony school, the team agrees that the relationship between the German School teacher at the colony and the Tripp-Delmont district is a promising practice. Teachers from both the public and German school share information and have devised a working relationship that is helping to build a bridge between the education communities.

Meets Requirements

The review team validates that the Trip-Delmont School District makes use of valid test instruments and these tests are administered by qualified personnel. Copies of evaluations are received by parents and parents receive a copy of their rights. A review of files found that reevaluations were completed every three years and prior to dismissal from special education. They do not validate that only tests that were listed were given; that parents have input into the evaluation process; nor that children are evaluated in all areas of suspected disability.

Areas out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:30:05. Content of notice.

The notice must include the following: A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report that the district uses as a basis for the proposal or refusal. In five out of thirteen files, tests were administered that were not on the form for consent to evaluate; there was no notice given to parents about the change and therefore no permission to administer the test. In two out of thirteen files a test was on the consent to evaluate form but was not administered.

ARSD 24:05:25:04, Evaluation procedures

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, a child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability and those evaluation procedures include a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child. In four out of five files of transition-aged students, there was no evidence of a transition evaluation by age sixteen. Social skills evaluations were not completed on children evaluated for Mental Retardation or Traumatic Brain Injury.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- File Reviews
- Comprehensive Plan
- FERPA
- Needs and Consent Forms

Promising Practices

The Tripp-Delmont school district has not had a request for due process hearing, or a complaint filed with the Special Education Programs Office.

Meets Requirements

The district ensures that the parents are informed of their parental rights under IDEA by providing them with the parent rights brochure and by initialing on the IEP. The parent rights brochure contains the rights afforded to parents of children in need of special education. Parents are encouraged by the district to review the brochure and ask any questions they may have.

The steering committee also found that the Tripp-Delmont district ensures that the parents have been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is being sought, in their native language or another mode of communication, when necessary.

They agree that the district has procedures that in place for the assignment of a surrogate parent to ensure that the rights of the child are protected when no parent can be identified

The steering committee noted that according to surveys from parents 100% of the parents agree that they receive information concerning their children from each teacher at the IEP meetings, and the results of their children's tests have all been explained to them in a way they can understand. The district provides the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records.

The Tripp-Delmont district has in place procedures for responding to complaint actions that ensure compliance as written in the comprehensive plan.

The Tripp-Delmont district also has policies and procedures in place for responding to requests for due process that ensure compliance. The Tripp-Delmont district has not had any due process hearing or complaints filed with the state department in the last 4 years.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees that the Tripp-Delmont school district meets requirements in the area of procedural safeguards with the exception of consent and written notice. The also find that not having a request for due process hearing, or a complaint filed with the Department of Education Programs is not a promising practice, but rather meets requirements.

Areas out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:30:05. Content of notice

The notice must include the following: A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report that the district uses as a basis for the proposal or refusal. In five out of thirteen files, tests were administered that were not on the form for consent to evaluate; there was no notice given to parents about the change and therefore no consent was given to administer the test. In two out of thirteen files a test was on the consent to evaluate form but was not administered (see also Principle Three, Appropriate Evaluation).

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Teacher File Reviews
- Student Files
- Surveys for Administration
- Technical Assistance Guide
- Student Survey
- Parent Surveys
- Regular and Special Education Surveys

Meets Requirements

The steering committee agreed that Tripp-Delmont district's written notices contain all the required content as evidenced on the notices in the files reviews.

The committee found that the Tripp-Delmont district meets requirements for ensuring appropriate membership of IEP teams including parents, teachers, administrator, and student.

Every effort is made by the IEP team to ensure for every student in the Tripp-Delmont District that IEP's contain all required content. The committee noted that present levels of performance contained specific skills in the student's strengths, weakness and the student's involvement in the general curriculum. IEPs reviewed consistently contained skill based, measurable/observable annual goals, documented how and when progress would be reported to parents, and the need for extended school year was considered.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees that the Tripp-Delmont School District has proper team membership at IEP meetings with the exception of outside agency representatives for students of transition age. They also agree with the steering committee that parents receive progress reports as often as information is sent out to all students; and extended school year is addressed at all IEP meetings.

Areas that need improvement

In their self-assessment the review team found that agency representatives were not invited to attend IEP meetings for any students of transition age. Through interviews, the review team noted that outside agencies are contacted and students are put in touch with them; however they have not been formally invited to meetings (five out of five files). This is an area that needs improvement.

Areas out of compliance

24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include: a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance. The monitoring team determined that in three out of three files of students over sixteen reviewed, there were no present levels of performance dealing with transition.

24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include: a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives. In six out of ten files reviewed, the students' annual goals were not consistently written as measurable. For example: “_____ will read books at the first grade level.” “_____ will improve receptive language skills.” “_____ will improve math skills to grade level.”

24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the regular class and in extracurricular and non-academic activities. Nine out of thirteen files focused on what the student needed to do, rather than the reason for providing services outside of the regular classroom or just stated where services would be provided. Rather than stating “[the student] will benefit from a chance to work on reading skills in the resource room” the justification should address why the resource room is the most appropriate environment “[the student] needs a quiet place free from distractions where repeated drill and practice can be provided and where he can read all material aloud, which has shown to improve his comprehension.”

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Student Files
- Tables E,F,G,I,J
- Surveys for General and Special Educators
- Parent Surveys
- Administrative Surveys
- Technical Assistance Guide

Meets Requirements

The steering committee found that the placement team takes all written and verbal information into consideration when determining the supports needed for the students to receive the least restrictive environment for their successful participation. Furthermore, general education staff participated in an in-service on roles and responsibilities of the general educator in the IEP process and the implementation of modification for student with disabilities on September 2003.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The review team, through teacher interviews and observation of students in the school, agrees that the Tripp-Delmont school district provides services in the least restrictive environment. All three teachers who were interviewed agreed that they have input into how to adjust their curriculum to meet the needs of students who receive special education services. They find that this ensures that all students can be successful in the regular education classes.